

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 512

By Campbell

A RESOLUTION recognizing Bob Bernstein, founder and owner of Bongo Java Roasting Company.

WHEREAS, it is the privilege of this General Assembly to recognize those exemplary entrepreneurs whose businesses not only contribute to the economy but are also a part of the cultural fabric of this State; and

WHEREAS, one such exceptional entrepreneur is Bob Bernstein, the founder and owner of Bongo Java Roasting Company, which is celebrating its thirtieth anniversary this year; and

WHEREAS, Bob Bernstein moved from his hometown of Skokie, Illinois, to Nashville in 1988 when he got a job as a reporter with *Nashville Business Journal*; at the time, he anticipated spending a year or two in the country music capital of the world before moving on to a bigger city with more of the amenities Nashville was then lacking, such as a coffeehouse; and

WHEREAS, a year or so later, Mr. Bernstein decided he liked living in Nashville more than he liked the journalism career that first attracted him to the city, and he began to think seriously about opening his own coffeehouse; and

WHEREAS, Nashville was a place full of songwriters, musicians, and even a few gainfully employed people who could use a coffeehouse, and Bob Bernstein convinced himself that he could open such a place; he had plenty of experience working in fast food joints and restaurants since the age of fourteen and had done everything from flipping burgers to waiting tables at a San Francisco seafood house—everything, that is, except managing or owning a business; and

WHEREAS, undeterred and a few weeks shy of his thirtieth birthday, Mr. Bernstein left his job at the newspaper and, with the help of a few friends and investors, set about opening his own coffeehouse; and

WHEREAS, on March 28, 1993, Bongo Java café opened its doors in an old house on Belmont Boulevard and quickly became a popular gathering place for nearby residents, students, musicians, and artists before finally becoming thoroughly established as a neighborhood destination for anyone looking for delicious coffee and delectable food; and

WHEREAS, today, Bongo Java is Nashville's oldest and most honored coffeehouse; Bongo Java café and its sister store, Fido, won Best Coffeehouse in the *Nashville Scene's* annual readers' poll for fourteen straight years, and the coffeehouse became world famous for its discovery of the Nunbun in 1996, drawing media attention the world over; and

WHEREAS, the success of Bongo Java led Bob Bernstein to expand his business across Nashville, establishing Bongo Java Roasting Company as a 100 percent organic and Fair Trade coffee company; helping to found Cooperative Coffees, a group of like-minded micro-roasters who work together to buy coffee directly from small-scale farmer cooperatives around the world; and opening Fido, Bongo East, Game Point Café, Game Point Retail, Grins Café, Bongo BNA (Airport), Fenwick's 300, and Bongo Java at Omni, with each of the cafés being unique to the neighborhood and communities it serves; and

WHEREAS, we are pleased to specially honor Bob Bernstein, founder and owner of Bongo Java Roasting Company; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor and commend Bob Bernstein for his myriad contributions to this State, congratulate him on the thirtieth anniversary of Bongo Java Roasting Company, and extend to him our best wishes for every success in his future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy and upon proper request made to

the appropriate clerk, the language appearing immediately following the State seal appear without House or Senate designation.